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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0784  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
INFO RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0370  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1079  
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA 4027

UNCLAS MADRID 000578

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA A.MONZ AND EUR/WE SZERDECKI/ESAMSON  
STATE ALSO FOR EEB/ESC/TFS C.BACKEMEYER  
COMMERCE FOR BIS: TCHRISTINO, JSONDERMAN, J.JUST, M.RUFE,  
R.JERESKI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SP](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: ORION AIR SAYS IT HAS ENDED CONTRACT WITH SYRIAN  
PEARL, REQUESTS USG ASSISTANCE

REF: A. DUDLEY-JERESKI E-MAIL EXCHANGE 6/10

[B.](#) LONDON 1185

[C.](#) STATE 49690

[D.](#) MADRID 489 AND PREVIOUS

[1.](#) (U) Please see request for guidance paragraph 5.

[2.](#) (SBU) On June 14, post received an e-mail message from  
Orion Air advising that Orion has terminated its contract  
with Syrian Pearl. Informal Embassy translation follows:

Begin text:

Dear Sirs:

ref: Orion Air

This is to inform you that this company, following the  
guidance of the U.S. Government - once confirmed by Spanish  
authorities - has terminated, effective immediately (Note:  
The Spanish expression used, "de manera fulminante," is  
stronger and implies a sudden and drastic action. End  
Note.), its relationship with the company Syrian Pearl.

Therefore, via this letter we request that you take the  
necessary measures to cancel the TDO against this company and  
proceed to communicate to all concerned businesses to cease  
to take measures against Orion Air and to lift the  
restrictions in force.

As a result of the rupture with Syrian Pearl, the EC-IVO  
aircraft currently in Damascus has been illegally retained by  
Syrian Pearl, making it impossible for the plane to return to  
Europe. We would appreciate your advice on the steps to take  
to withdraw the plane from the Syrian airport.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Arancha Merino  
Director General  
Orion Air

End text.

[3.](#) (SBU) On June 15, Orion Air Manager Jose Maria Orea  
called post to convey again the message that Orion had broken  
off dealings with the Syrian airline and to request that the  
TDO be lifted. He clarified that it was Syrian airport  
authorities who were not allowing Orion's crew access to the

aircraft in order to fly it back. Orea said it was not clear whether the Syrian airline or the Syrian government was behind this. He added that the Spanish Embassy in Damascus was engaged.

¶4. (SBU) On a related subject, as reported in ref A e-mail, post was contacted June 10 by Elena MacCormick, Director General of Pan Air, a company with a maintenance contract with Orion Air for its plane in Syria. MacCormick advised that upon learning on June 8 of the TDO, she had that day recalled Pan Air's three mechanics who were working on the plane. She stated that the removal of the employees effectively grounded the aircraft.

¶5. (SBU) Request for guidance: Please advise how post should reply to Orion's message, or, alternatively, whether we should urge Orion to contact Commerce/BIS directly.  
CHACON